

## What Is It?

The **Parental Involvement Pledge** is a learning compact. It has two components. It provides an opportunity for parents to formalize their commitment to working with their child's school through a written agreement they can complete and take to their parent leader, school secretary, teacher, or principal. The Pledge also provides a survey of parent volunteer interests. The survey identifies areas in which parents can volunteer in school, outside the classroom and at home.

**THEREFORE AS A PARENT, GRANDPARENT, OR CARING ADULT**, I take personal responsibility for my child's safety and education and the safety and education of the children in this community.

I pledge to volunteer a **minimum of five hours** of my time to my public schools each semester.

I pledge to spend a **minimum of fifteen minutes** each school night reading with my child or we will work together on homework and enrichment activity.

If I have questions about grading, attendance policies, discipline, classroom management, etc., I pledge to ask for additional information.

- School staff **share the Parental Involvement Pledge** that outlines how parents and school staff will share the responsibility for improved student achievement of their student with all parents at annual meetings and through the school Web site. Information about the Parental Involvement Pledge will also be referenced in newsletters, e-mails, and other common communication channels.
- School staff share information with parents about all of the school's **special support programs**, including tutoring programs and extracurricular activities. Parents will be encouraged to support their child's participation in these activities.
- School staff often hold an **annual meeting to inform parents about the district parental involvement plan**, the parents' right to be involved in the education of their child, and the **Parental Involvement Pledge**. School staff, parents, and students are encouraged to attend and actively participate in these events.
- School staff **post information about parental involvement meetings** and extracurricular parental involvement activities on the district Web site and in public venues and send notices via e-mail. Parents will be encouraged to also share information via informal networks.
- School staff will hold **regular parent/teacher conferences** on a flexible schedule. Parents will be encouraged to request conferences when they have questions about their child's academic performance, testing procedures, and postsecondary planning.
- School staff often plan and hold an **annual recognition event for parents and volunteers** who have helped throughout the year. Students will be asked to take a special role in helping to recognize parents' efforts.

## **Building Block: Communication Wise Ways® Solid Foundation Compact**

### **School Community Compact**

Many schools have developed Compacts that outline the responsibilities of students, teachers, parents, and sometimes principals. Schools often call these "Learning Compacts." Some schools use the U.S. Department of Education's "Reading Compact" process. A school needs only one Compact, whatever it is

called. Some of the items in the Compact may vary by grade level. The sample Compact on the next page provides a model. If the school already uses a Compact, that Compact can be modified to include the essential elements listed below.

### **Essential Elements of a Compact**

--Includes goals for reading, study habits, and respectful/responsible behavior. Other goals may also be included, and the suggested goals below may be modified to fit the purposes of the school. Schools should include special attention to the three areas of greatest shared responsibility between the school and the home—reading, study habits, and respectful/responsible behavior—as well as ways students, teachers, and parents communicate with one another.

--Lists the responsibilities (some schools prefer the term “expectations”) of parents/families, students, and teachers. May also include list for principal.

-- Provides guidelines for homework and home study habits.

--Provides guidelines for parent-child reading and teacher’s reading assignments.

--Provides guidelines for encouraging respectful, responsible behavior.

--Provides guidelines for communication within the school community.

--Encourages attendance at parent-teacher-student conferences and open houses.

--Encourages parents to participate in parent education programs offered by the school.

--Outlines ways the school partners with families to enhance students’ learning and mastery of standards.

Look over your school’s Compact if it has one. Develop one Compact for your school that includes the essential elements above. Check the items above to be sure they are included in your Compact. Submit your Compact for inclusion in the School Improvement Plan. Distribute the Compact to teachers and parents (it’s a good idea to have parents and student sign a copy and return it to the school). Include the Compact on the agenda of parent-teacher-student conferences. Talk about it at open houses. Review it at faculty meetings.

If your school includes a preschool program, or if you would like to include guidance for parents about their preschoolers, consider how each “responsibility” in your Compact might apply to preschool children. For example, preschoolers may not have homework, but it is still a good idea to encourage interactive, parent-child learning activities. You may want to add specific “responsibilities” that clearly apply to preschoolers. If your school includes a preschool program, then it should be clear that parents of preschoolers are included in open houses and parent-teacher-student conferences.